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BULLETIN

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AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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Secretary—George B. Utley, 78 E. Washington St., Chicago.

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Executive offices—78 E. Washington Street, Chicago, Ill.

A. L. A. EXHIBIT AT PANAMA-PACIFIC EXPOSITION

In November the committee in charge of the A. L. A. Exhibit at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition sent a communication to all chief librarians in the Association asking that pictures, reports, leaflets, maps, diagrams, catalogs, book-lists, blanks, posters, and other suitable material for exhibit be sent to Mr. J. L. Gillis, librarian of the California State Library, Sacramento, who had kindly agreed to take on himself the large task of receiving, assembling, and arranging this material. Mr. Gillis reports that a great mass from libraries all over the country has been received on which he and his staff are hard at work, and that he hopes to evolve a very creditable display of what American libraries are doing.

At the time the circular was mailed there was small expectation that the exhibit sent to Leipzig, which it was confidently expected would form the nucleus for San Francisco, would be received in time to be of use, but thanks to the assistance of officials of the State Department and others the Leipzig material has since the first of the year been received in New York and started on its way across the continent.

For the construction of booths, freight charges, supervision of exhibit and other expenses the Committee estimates that at least \$4,000 is needed. The California Library Association has appropriated \$1,000, which represents contributions by California libraries and librarians, the A. L. A. has appropriated \$500 in addition to the \$500 given for the Leipzig exhibit, and, in response to appeals by the Committee, other contributions are coming in, several libraries subscribing \$100 each. At least \$1,500 more is needed to assure the success of the project. The chairman of the Committee is Dr. Frank P. Hill, of the Brooklyn Public Library, and he will be glad to receive contributions, large and small.

LEAGUE OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONS

Meeting of the Middle-West Section, Chicago, December 30th, 1914—
January 1st, 1915.

The meeting of the middle-west section of the League of Library Commissions was held at the Hotel LaSalle, Chicago, December 30th, 1914, to January 1st, 1915. There were present at least one representative, and in some cases several, of library commissions in Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin, with a large number of other library workers present at each session.

The first subject taken up at the opening session on Wednesday morning was,

"Co-operation between library workers and publishers and book dealers."

Dr. George F. Bowerman of the Washington, D. C., Public Library, was the first speaker, and briefly summarized said: The librarian is interested not only in getting more and better books for his library and having them read by an enlarged constituency, but also in having more and better books owned by his constituency, and fewer bad and mediocre books owned and read. He wants also to see fewer and better books published, and those published in larger editions at lower prices, that libraries may be able to buy more copies.

The motive and standpoint of publishers and book dealers is the financial one. Unless publishers can be convinced that the library is a large and increasing purchaser of books, and that the existence of the library does not hurt, but actually promotes the sale of books to individuals, any auxiliary efforts at co-operation are futile.

Librarians ought to help the publishers to make a bigger and more permanent success of a few of their most important items, and thus convince them of the financial advantage of publishing fewer books. Publishers ought to make imprints mean more.

In the discussion which followed, the president first called for remarks from the three representatives present from A. C. McClurg & Company. Mr. Gould, the first of these speakers, said that larger editions lower prices and therefore have a tendency to keep out new authors, and while publishers are trying to keep down the number of books, they wish to encourage new authors.

Mr. Wolter stated that their bulletins necessarily include books which they do not recommend, but want to sell, but that they also call the attention of librarians to desirable books, to better editions than those ordered, and to objectionable books supposedly included inadvertently in orders.

Mr. Bray of the publishing department

said that all publishers want fewer and better books because better books mean better prices, but it is not always the better books that sell, and a publisher must publish books that sell if he is to exist.

Miss Massee thought that librarians should be creators of public opinion, and should make the libraries centers of book information as well as book distribution, and that buyers should let the publishers know that they secured their ideas from the public library.

Dr. Bostwick had tried to find out whether a library public was recognized by publishers, book sellers or authors, and found no such distinction existed.

The discussion of the question, "Can there be an effective method of selecting foreign books suitable for traveling libraries" was led by Miss Borresen of the South Dakota Commission, who gave her experience with lists of foreign books used in a library in a community with many foreign borrowers, showing the need of expert knowledge both of suitable books in other languages, and of the needs of the readers themselves.

Dr. Bowerman said that he had once urged that the A. L. A. Booklist be given a foreign supplement including the most important new books each year, and cumulating in an annual supplement.

Miss Massee thought one person could not be competent to select books in all languages, and that librarians who meet the people of different nationalities were much better able to select such books.

It was voted on motion of Miss Baldwin that a committee be appointed to consider further some plan for co-operation between commissions and librarians in the selection of books in foreign languages.

Replies as follows were given by the different Commissions to the question, "In what form of commission work are the best returns obtained:"

Mr. Hadley of Colorado was decidedly of the opinion that development in the efficiency of local libraries through advisory work and other assistance given by

the state library commissions was by all odds the most valuable work done by the commissions.

Miss Price said that the Illinois Library Extension Commission felt that the work which had brought in the most effective returns during the last year had been the loan of the new rural school libraries, though the making of booklists for first purchases in new libraries, and the development of libraries already established had also been an important work.

Miss Robinson of Iowa thought that if the question included comparison of time and expense involved larger returns are received from extension work in the establishment of new public libraries and the increased efficiency of those already in existence, but taking into consideration the need of a large part of the population which could never be reached by public libraries the traveling library work is very important, and not to be neglected.

Mr. Belden said that in Massachusetts, the best results come from personal visits of commission workers to small libraries, which give opportunity for discussion of library problems with librarians and library boards and the arousing of interest in the library throughout the whole community.

Miss Baldwin of Minnesota considered the test of efficiency to lie in the wide distribution of books offering equal library privileges throughout the state. The traveling library is the first means to this end, but the best results are obtained from the establishment of permanent library organizations and the enlargement of facilities of existing library centers.

Miss Wales believed, because of the widely scattered population and the absence of medium sized cities in Missouri, that up to the present time their best work had been done through the traveling library.

Miss Templeton of Nebraska thought that the establishment of a strong library system of county, township and city libraries was the most permanent in its results, and to this end field visits of commission

workers was the most valuable work undertaken.

Mrs. Budlong of North Dakota felt that in advertising and securing support the legislative reference department was the most helpful; in the development of the state as a whole through improved conditions in rural communities, traveling libraries; in the development of citizenship through individual growth, reference work with clubs, students, etc., and in permanent library progress, field work with small library centers.

Mr. Dudgeon of Wisconsin thought that the efficiency of library service depends upon 1. Need of person reached; 2. Quality of book furnished; 3. Frequency of circulation of each book; 4. The cost. Some rural sections are without books; such sections will read high-grade books, each book is often read by many persons, the cost of traveling library service to rural communities is less than to city readers. Therefore, serving rural communities through traveling libraries and by parcel post is best worth while.

Mr. Legler said that the answer to this question must be governed by the permanency of the results obtained; that he believed in the traveling library in all forms, but felt that the work which would leave the largest impress is that growing out of personal visitation of trained workers to the small libraries, bringing in better methods, and imparting information and enthusiasm to librarians and library boards. Traveling library work cannot be as permanent because it cannot be followed up.

The question was then taken up: "Is there any way in which small libraries can be warned against buying unsuitable books?"

Miss Masee said that the duty of the Booklist was to emphasize the positive side, and to choose books suitable for small libraries, and that to publish lists of censored books would subject it to just criticism. Dr. Andrews thought that libraries ought to be warned not to buy books not included in the Booklist unless they were

known to be good, and if purchase of other books be urged, that proof of their suitability be required. Miss Plummer asked if the Booklist could not print a statement that the editor would give her opinion upon any book upon request. Miss Titcomb suggested that this should be a matter of education on the part of librarians and library boards. Mr. Sanborn thought that librarians and library boards should be educated, not so much to know books as to resist the demands from the outside, and to know that they need not buy books because asked for. Mr. Legler offered the warning that library boards should be urged to let library people make the selections because they have the approved lists, and that book agents are often responsible for the purchase of long sets of books.

The meeting then adjourned until the next morning.

Second Session

On Thursday morning the session opened with the reading by Miss Tyler of Miss Brown's report on Study Club Outlines. This report reviewed the action taken by the League at previous meetings growing out of the need for the publication of outlines of this kind and the desirability of co-operation in their preparation, and offered for consideration the three questions previously discussed, and supposedly settled, but now raised again by criticisms on the sample outline prepared by Miss Brown as editor, and submitted according to agreement by Mr. Wilson to the Commissions for approval. These questions are: 1. Whether question or topical form shall be used. 2. Text book. 3. Length of collateral reference list.

The burden of discussion gathered around the question of form, and the consensus of opinion was crystallized in the following motion offered by Mrs. Earle of Indiana, and unanimously carried—That the questions involved in Miss Brown's report be left entirely to Miss Brown as editor and Mr. Wilson as publisher, and that

the committee and the Commissions tender their services in this matter.

The discussion of, "What can be done to secure better apprentices and assistants in small libraries" was led by Miss Templeton of Nebraska, who stated that while the difficulties are several, they resolve themselves into one—lack of money with which to pay salaries which will hold competent assistants. The small library must, therefore, become a training ground for young women who will go further in library work, and the more promising she is the sooner will she pass on to further training, or a more lucrative position.

As a compensation a better quality of work is secured from one looking forward to librarianship as a profession, the librarian is also likely to be less slipshod in her work if it is to be so constantly scrutinized by other eyes, her own enthusiasm is freshened by work with eager beginners, and in presenting the work her own ideas are clarified in regard to the real essentials.

Further, there is no finer preparation for library work than in the small library where the assistant has intimate contact with the librarian, and gains the broader outlook of superior experience, and where the mechanism is so simple that she readily gains an idea of the relation of its parts.

Miss Hazeltine, who followed, said that the need is imminent and great and recognized by all, and that the remedy lies on a basis of economy and pedagogy. 1. In the past the place of assistants has often been filled by those who have served at a nominal salary for a love of the work. But that day is past and librarians now must work for hire, and, therefore, secure employment where the compensation is adequate and where better increase is given. To better the economic basis there must be, 1. Increased appropriation. 2. The work of assistants must be placed on an efficiency scale. (The articles by Purinton in *The Independent* for November 30th and December 28th on "Personal efficiency" should be read and adopted by librarians and assistants.) 3. Seek good

apprentices, define the entrance requirements and what the end of the course will bring. But to expound this proposition is more easy than to work it out in practice. II. Plan the instruction of the apprentices as a regular course. This will help to establish the economic basis and give the prestige that comes to a library from careful training of assistants.

At this point a discussion was held on the "Apprentices course" that is being published serially in the Wisconsin Library Bulletin, the work of the faculty of the Wisconsin Library School.

The last question taken up on Thursday morning had reference to "The feasibility of the co-operation of adjoining states in holding summer school sessions alternately," and a paper sent by Mr. Walter of New York, was read by Mr. Wyer.

The advantages of such co-operation, as seen by Mr. Walter, were, 1. Greater breadth of view from the broadening of the field by including one or more states. 2. Economy, as a school of fifty can be conducted at much less relative expense than one of thirty, and 3. Variety in more special features made possible by more instructors, resulting not only in increase of enrollment, but a more frequent return of those previously enrolled.

On the other hand there would be uncertainty of financial support; the probable success of the school would depend on the character of the course offered; and a scheme of co-operation cannot be measurably successful which increases the student attendance without adequately increasing the instructional force.

The discussion which followed showed a unanimity of opinion among the Commissions that the objections to co-operation were, 1. The legal difficulty growing out of combination in summer school work of the Commissions with the state university; 2. That some schools were already too large to make additions desirable; 3. The additional expense to students in greater distance of travel; and, 4. The lack of personal touch between Commission workers and students from

their own states. All agreed that co-operation in advanced courses was much more desirable than in elementary work.

The President announced that he had assumed the right to appoint a committee to recommend action on the Green bill, if action seemed wise, and called for the report of this committee which follows:

Report on the Green Bill

Your committee on the Green bill wishes to make a report of progress and to present two recommendations for action: The bill in question has been drawn up by Congressman Wm. Green of Iowa, largely on the recommendation of Mr. W. R. Orchard, a member of the Iowa Commission. This bill provides for the free postal delivery and return of books sent out by public libraries over rural free delivery routes. The advantages of such a privilege to libraries and their patrons are at once apparent. Those libraries which, receiving financial support from surrounding rural districts, have offered parcel post service to their rural patrons upon the making of a deposit to cover postal charges, have not found the farmer, as a rule, willing to pay postage in addition to his taxes. Such a system as this bill proposes would undoubtedly greatly aid the rural extension work.

The members of your committee have tried to sound the opinion of librarians, postmasters, congressmen, and officials in their respective states. Librarians, have, of course, enthusiastically received the idea. One or two postmasters have felt that such a system would too heavily burden the rural carriers without compensation. Others, however, have heartily approved the project and have volunteered their help. These inquiries of postmasters have brought out the fact that the Postmaster-General has been urging postmasters to develop the sending of library books by parcel post, and if this is true, the Department should not be unalterably opposed to aiding the libraries in this way.

No real opposition has been expressed

by any one. Any objections suggested have been, not existing, but possible difficulties.

The question naturally arises as to whether such action should be taken by Congress or by the Post-Office Department if, as does not seem probable, the Department could legally do so. One postmaster feels that Congress should, by legislation, compel the Postmaster-General to act. Whichever method may be better, the originators of the bill are, in fact trying to introduce it in Congress.

Your committee accordingly is unanimously of the opinion that as the Commissions will be chiefly benefited by this privilege, they should individually work through the libraries in their respective states and through their Congressmen for the introduction and favorable consideration of this bill. The committee also feels that, although the League may be the association chiefly interested in the passage of this bill, the weightier influence of the American Library Association would be of great assistance, and that as long as there is a committee of this organization on federal and state relations, the League might well bespeak its aid.

Accordingly your committee recommends: That the League of Library Commissions bring the Green bill to the attention of the A. L. A. Council with the request that it be referred with approval to the Committee on Federal and State relations for help in securing the passage of this bill; that, in case this bill is not acted upon during the present session of Congress, it be brought up for consideration and action at the next business meeting of the League, and that as concerted action cannot be legally voted at this meeting, the individual members use their influence to secure attention to and passage for this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

JULIA A. ROBINSON.

FANNIE C. RAWSON.

HENRY N. SANBORN.

Chairman.

On motion of Dr. Bostwick the report was accepted and the recommendations adopted.

Third Session

The Friday morning session was opened by a paper on "The most effective system of library institutes," by Miss Caroline Webster, library organizer in New York State, read by the secretary. Miss Webster said that the aim of these institutes in New York was co-operation and getting together for instruction and mutual conference, and that, as a result of their experience in this work, the following definite conclusions have been reached. 1. Work to be effective must be under the State Library Commission. 2. It is well to have the state association the nominal head, thus affording the co-operation and assistance of the leading libraries of the state. 3. It is important to have an outline in simple elementary form for a course of instruction.

Miss Robinson, in describing this work in Iowa, said the aim was the same as that in New York, and that she heartily agreed with Miss Webster's conclusions regarding the relation of the Library Commission and of the State Association to these meetings, but in Iowa the policy has been, not to give help through definite instruction from the leaders, but through mutual discussion and exchange of views and experiences among the librarians themselves, and that the meetings have proved themselves to be thoroughly worth while, being nearer to the small libraries both geographically and in the subjects discussed than the larger meetings of the State Association.

The report of the meeting of the Eastern Section, held in New York, December 28th to 29th, was read by Mr. Dudgeon, and brought up again the discussion of foreign lists. On Mr. Dudgeon's suggestion that books and bulletins on agriculture very seldom appear in foreign languages, the motion was made and carried that this matter be referred to the committee appointed to consider foreign lists.

Miss Baldwin reviewed the Washington report of the Committee on aid to new Commissions, which included the following suggestions:

1. Printing in convenient pamphlet form the model commission law recommended at the Bretton Woods meeting of the League.

2. Making a collection of charts showing the growth of the work in various states, and of pictures of traveling libraries, book wagons, etc.

3. Compilation of handbook giving information most likely to be of use in a campaign to arouse interest in commission work.

4. The appointment of a committee, of which the president of the League shall be chairman, to keep in touch with conditions in the states which are endeavoring to secure commissions and to offer such advice and assistance as may be possible.

After a discussion of the subject the following motion was made; That the recommendations of the committee be accepted except the one making the president chairman of the permanent committee. After further discussion of the immediate needs, the additional motion was passed; That the model law, with additional material be printed at once, if it can be gotten ready in time for use this year.

The question, "How can the character of a book be conveyed to patrons and custodians of traveling libraries?" called forth the following suggestions:

Miss Stearns, of Minnesota, stated that they had tried pasting annotations on the doors of the traveling library boxes, and had also used bookmarks. Miss Rawson of Kentucky said that they had pasted slips in the front of books. Mr. Dudgeon thought that there might be co-operation in preparing the annotations to be used by the different commissions. Mr. Wright of Kansas City told of a plan he had seen used by a county library in California of pasting the paper book covers on a poster which could be hung in a conspicuous place. Mr. Dudgeon said, that in Wisconsin they were now trying the plan of past-

ing annotations on the outside of the front cover of the books in three of five libraries of a group that there might be some basis for ascertaining results. Miss Stearns suggested the sending of annotations to the newspaper in the place to which a traveling library was going. Miss Templeton said this had been done in one case but without knowledge of results.

On motion of Miss Baldwin the Secretary was instructed to extend to the Chicago Library Club the appreciation of the League for the entertainment afforded them. Carried. Adjourned sine die.

JULIA A. ROBINSON,
Secretary.

WRITINGS ON AMERICAN HISTORY

The importance to libraries of the work here considered has led us to depart from our practice of including in the Bulletin only matter officially related to the American Library Association or affiliated bodies.—EDITOR.

An important work for all students and readers of American history is *Writings on American History*. This is an annual bibliography, attempting, and practically succeeding in the attempt to compile all of the books and articles relating to the United States and British North America that have appeared during the calendar year.

The bibliography is prepared by Miss Grace Gardner Griffin in the Library of Congress with all the bibliographical facilities of that institution to assist her. The American Historical Association stands sponsor for the work.

The expense of preparing the material is provided for through the liberality of certain historical societies and individuals. The printing of the *Writings* was undertaken one year by the Carnegie Institution, and for three years by the Macmillan Company. When there did not seem to be sufficient response to warrant its publication by a commercial firm, rather than see this important bibliography discontinued, the American Historical Association printed it as a part of its annual reports. This was not merely a drain upon the finances of the Association, it presented the material in an inconvenient form. To relieve the situation the Yale University Press, with